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Christmas Cerebration? Is the Spectacle of Entertainment in Modern Churches True Worship?

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In the heart of Plano, Texas, Prestonwood Baptist Church—a megachurch boasting over 40,000 members and led by Dr. Jack Graham—has become a center of controversy with its annual *"Gift of Christmas"* production. Advertised as a *"visually stunning multimedia event complete with special effects,"* this extravaganza features a massive cast, a live orchestra, flying angels, and even Santa Claus soaring above the audience (Watch this Video). While the production dazzles thousands each year, it raises profound questions about the nature of worship in today's churches. Are such elaborate spectacles truly honoring God, or are they a modern manifestation of the lukewarm faith condemned in Revelation?

John Bunyan's timeless allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, introduces us to Vanity Fair—a marketplace of worldly temptations designed to distract and ensnare pilgrims on their journey to the Celestial City. Prestonwood Baptist Church's *"Gift of Christmas"* production seems to be a contemporary incarnation of this Vanity Fair. With its pyrotechnics, special effects, elaborate costumes, and focus on a *"wow"* factor, the true meaning of the season—the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ—is overshadowed. Is this a celebration of Christ, or is the spectacle itself the focus? Elves, Santa Claus, and flying drummers have no place in the church and absolutely nothing to do with the incarnation of our Lord.
How did the church come to prioritize entertainment over genuine worship? Does this not resemble the distractions and false allurements of Vanity Fair? Bunyan's depiction serves as a stark warning: the glitz and glamour of the world are designed to lead us astray. What does it say about our discernment when churches embrace these worldly methods under the guise of worship?

The Bible provides a clear framework for worship. Jesus Himself declared, *"But an hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. Yes, the Father wants such people to worship Him"* (John 4:23). Worship, according to Scripture, is not about grandiose displays or theatrical performances but about a sincere heart turned toward God. The Apostle Paul emphasized simplicity and order in worship, stating, *"Everything is to be done decently and in order"* (1 Corinthians 14:40). How then do strobe lights, flying drummers, high-tech video walls, and satanic symbolisms like false lights associated with secret societies align with this biblical mandate?
The lyrical and dance styles of the production bear striking similarities to those found in nightclubs, with secular clothing that mirrors the world rather than the modesty and holiness befitting God's people. Does this form of worship truly reflect the humility and reverence that God desires, or does it instead glorify human creativity and entertainment? Could such spectacles be distracting us from the true purpose of gathering as the body of Christ? How can the church, the bride of Christ, embrace such worldly displays without grieving the Holy Spirit?
The *"Gift of Christmas"* production mirrors a trend in many modern churches: the blending of sacred worship with worldly entertainment. This synthesis often leads to a dilution of the gospel, creating an experience that appeals to the senses but lacks spiritual substance. Is this not reminiscent of the Laodicean church, which Jesus rebuked for being neither hot nor cold? He warned, *"Because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of My mouth"* (Revelation 3:16).

The elaborate nature of Prestonwood church's production also highlights a deeper issue: the incorporation of pagan elements into Christian worship. Santa Claus, Christmas trees, and December 25th itself all have origins in pagan traditions. Santa Claus can be traced back to the Roman Catholic veneration of St. Nicholas, while the Christmas tree stems from ancient Babylonian practices symbolizing the rebirth of Nimrod as Tammuz.
Jeremiah warned against such customs, saying, *"For the customs of the peoples are worthless; someone cuts down a tree from the forest, it is worked by the hands of a craftsman with a chisel"* (Jeremiah 10:3-4).
What does it say about our faith when we embrace these symbols in our worship? By adopting these practices, are churches unintentionally promoting idolatry? Paul admonished the Corinthians, *"What agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For we are the temple of the living God"* (2 Corinthians 6:16). The Christmas tree, often adorned with gold and silver, resembles the idolatrous practices denounced in Scripture. Are we teaching our children to revere a pagan myth rather than the true and living God? Whose face do we truly associate with these customs—Christ's, or Satan's?
Have we examined these practices in light of God's Word, or have we blindly followed traditions? Can we afford to overlook the spiritual consequences of these compromises? Are we not tacitly endorsing the very idolatry that God has repeatedly condemned?

Another troubling aspect of Prestonwood's production is the commercialization of worship. Tickets for the event range from $19 to $69, turning what should be a free celebration of Christ's birth into a monetized spectacle. Jesus Himself drove out the money changers from the temple, saying, *"It is written, My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of thieves!"* (Matthew 21:13). How would He respond to a church charging admission for what is purportedly a celebration of His birth?
The production's focus on visual and auditory stimulation shifts the attention from God to the performance. This aligns more closely with worldly entertainment than with biblical worship, which calls for humility and reverence. As John warned, *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him"* (1 John 2:15). What are we teaching the next generation about the essence of faith? Are we encouraging them to seek Christ, or merely to consume religious entertainment?
True Christians must ask: Can we, in good conscience, participate in such productions? Even if tickets have already been purchased, would attending not make us complicit in this deception? Do we not risk dishonoring God by endorsing a spectacle that prioritizes worldly grandeur over spiritual truth?

The church's embrace of such practices serves as a sobering reflection of the broader challenges facing modern Christianity. Revelation warns, *"Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins or receive any of her plagues"* (Revelation 18:4). Christians must examine their participation in these events and ask whether they are truly honoring God or merely indulging in worldly pleasures.
True worship does not require flying angels or dazzling light shows. It requires a heart fully surrendered to God, as David expressed: *"Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise. You do not want a sacrifice, or I would give it; You are not pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. You will not despise a broken and humbled heart, God"* (Psalm 51:15-17).
Do we have the courage to abandon traditions that dishonor God, even if they are deeply ingrained in our culture? What would it cost us to reject these practices? More importantly, what is the cost of continuing to embrace them? Are we willing to stand apart, even if it means facing ridicule or rejection?

The spectacle at Prestonwood Baptist Church reveals a mesmerizing display that has seductively drawn thousands into its embrace. Like a siren's call, modern Christianity has evolved into an intoxicating blend of entertainment and spirituality. As Christ's return draws near, we witness an increasing number of churches succumbing to the hypnotic allure of worldly entertainment and ancient pagan traditions. These enchanting distractions are not merely innocent diversions - they are cunningly crafted spiritual seductions by wolves in sheep's clothing, designed to bewitch believers away from vigilantly watching for Christ's imminent return.
Jesus warned us about these last days, saying, *"For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God's chosen ones"* (Matthew 24:24). While church leaders orchestrate these spellbinding productions and bewitching entertainments, they neglect Paul's exhortation to *"Proclaim the message; persist in it whether convenient or not; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching"* (2 Timothy 4:2).
The hour is late, and Christ could return at any moment for His bride. Yet instead of preparing the church for His return, many leaders are casting a spell of spiritual slumber with their enchanting worldly spectacles. Remember Jesus' warning: *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven"* (Matthew 7:21).
Therefore, beloved in Christ, I urgently implore you: Do not be seduced by these beguiling entertainments, even if you have already purchased tickets. The time is short, and we must be found watching and waiting for our Lord's return, not entranced by worldly diversions. Stand firm against these spiritual enchantments, separate yourself from these modern-day Babylon practices, and keep your lamp burning bright as we await the Bridegroom's return.

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